1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
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measles and small-pox, and the cruelty of the mothers towards their offspring, have combined to render their number so small. Now learn the cause of this inhumanity in the women. The mothers suckle their children for three years, during which time they have no conjugal intercourse with their husbands, who, tired of this long delay, often marry another wife. The women, therefore, kill their unborn babes through fear of repudiation, sometimes getting rid of them by violent arts, without waiting for their birth. Afraid of being widows in the life-time of their husbands, they blush not to become more savage than tigresses. Mothers spare their female offspring more frequently than the males, because the sons, when grown up, are obliged to purchase a wife, whereas daughters, at an age to be married, may be sold to the bridegroom at almost any price.

From all this you may easily guess that the Abiponian nations abound more in women than in men, both because female infants are seldomer killed by their mothers, because the women never fall in battle as is the case with the men, and because women are naturally longer lived than men. Many writers make the mistake of attributing the present scanty population of America to the cruelty of the Spaniards, when they should rather accuse that

OF THE INFANTICIDE MOTHERS.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE WEDDINGS OF THE ABIPONES.

WHENEVER an Abipon thinks fit to choose a wife, he must bargain with the parents of the girl about the price to be payed for her. Four or more horses, strings of beads made of glass or snail-shells, a woollen garment of various colours, woven like a Turkish carpet, a spear furnished with an iron point, and other articles of this kind, are paid by the bridegroom. It frequently happens that the girl rescinds what had been settled and agreed upon between the parents and the bridegroom, obstinately rejecting the very mention of marriage. Many girls, through fear of being compelled to marry, have concealed themselves in the recesses of woods or lakes; seeming to dread the assaults of tigers less than the untried nuptials. Some of them, just before they are to be brought to the bridegroom's house, fly to the chapel, and there, hidden behind the altar, elude the threats and the expectation of the unwelcome bridegroom.

Let us suppose the Abiponian bride to have acquiesced in her parents' wishes with regard to